

Legend Of Voracious Bear Based On Fact

By Emily J. Hadcl

Some time ago we received a very nice letter from a 75-year-old resident of Buckeye, Va., in Buchanan County, between Appoan and Mountain if memory does not fail us. His is F. W. Ruckman.

This gentleman writes, "Your paper seems to be giving much favor in my country. I've heard it said that to learn what is going on in Buchanan we should read the Buckeye Post-Herald."

"I am intrigued by the historical articles by Shirley Donnelly."

"Just recently I found written proof of a legend I have heard all my life and am sending it along. If you find it of interest, you are welcome to use it."

The truth is that we do find the account of more than passing interest. Since it is somewhat long for a day's column, we are taking the liberty of splitting it into two parts and using it here.

We have been saving it for use at this time — we are on vacation this week — and will write Reader E. W. Ruckman as soon as possible on our return to the office and personal duties. We want to get from him additional information on another subject about which he has written. It seems that he has had a great personal experience during his life which may also prove telling in the columns of the Post-Herald.

But now to the story of a Buchanan County legend — a legend of bear country which has been shown to have some basis in fact. Though the written record is only a bare mention of a tragic event, the details supplied are those which have been passed down by word of mouth among Buchanan people.

By F. W. Ruckman

An elderly man with grey, old as the hills, and the only one of his kind in our town, so far as I have been able to learn, has been known to me for an authority than anyone else in town.

He was well known to read and write, and was very friendly, and went on a journey up to the settlement of Morgan County. There he was in the Bishop Academy. There he saw in the Bishop Academy. There he saw in the Bishop Academy. There he saw in the Bishop Academy.

The legend is that some time back there was a bear in the mountains. It was a very large bear, and it was very fierce. It was very large, and it was very fierce. It was very large, and it was very fierce. It was very large, and it was very fierce.

One day, a man was walking in the mountains. He was walking in the mountains. He was walking in the mountains. He was walking in the mountains. He was walking in the mountains.

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The father's frantic calls were heard by the Cochran, an Irish American family, who had settled at the foot of the mountain a short time before. Pursuit and search revealed some fragments of clothing and stout traces of the trail on Little Mountain, about two miles distant.

The father must have left the cabin soon afterwards, since I find no other mention of the name.

—BUCKEY, W. VA., THURSDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 17, 1937



People Rushed From Here After Bear, Stolen Child

This is a picture of the house, located in Buchanan County, Virginia, in the setting for a legend dealing with a bear. The full legend is recounted in the Top Of The Morning column on this page. The house was built and the picture were provided by F. W. Ruckman of Buckeye, Buchanan County.

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about a thousand in the summer, who with their families, and occasional individuals, came out of the wilderness to the family, and comfortable houses left as a rich heritage which we should cherish and perpetuate.

Legend Of Voracious Bear Based On Fact

By Emile J. Hodel

Some time ago we received a very nice letter from a 74-year-old resident of Buckeye, up in Pocahontas County between Millpoint and Marlinton if memory does not fail us. He is F. W. Ruckman.

This septuagenarian wrote, "Your paper seems to be gaining much favor in my county. I've heard it said that to learn what is going on in Pocahontas we should read the Beckley Post-Herald.

"I am intrigued by the historical articles by Shirley Donnelly.

"Just recently I found written proof of a legend I have heard all my life and am sending it along. If you find it of interest, you are welcome to use it."

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But now to the story of a Pocahontas County legend — a legend of bear country which has been shown to have some basis in fact. Though the written record is only a bare mention of a tragic event, the details supplied are those which have been handed down by word of mouth among Pocahontas people.

By F. W. Ruckman

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BECKLEY.



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A legend, hoary with age, old as the
nation, and the only one of its kind in our
state, so far as I have been able to learn
was recorded by no less an authority than
Bishop Francis Ashbury.

My son, who learned to read and write,
put on shoes recently and went on a
journey up to the settlement at Morgan-
town. There he saw in the Bishop As-
bury's three-volume journal some facts
about things that happened right here in
the Bockeye region of Pocahontas
County.

The legend is that some one hundred
and sixty-seven years ago a bear came
into a clearing where a man was working
in the field and carried off and ate a child.

Naturally details became bigger after
so great a time, causing argument as to
the name of the family, the exact loca-
tion, and some even doubted that it ever
happened. My interest was rekindled
when I read Bishop Ashbury's journal en-
try and I set out to learn what the story
boiled down to.

Mrs. Ed Boblett, who was raised on the
opposite side of the mountain from me,
and both of us about a crow-measured
mile from the scene of the tragedy, had
the clearest version. Her mother was a
natural born historian, as was her great-
aunt, Mary Cackley.

The name of the family, they remem-
bered, was Naylor. The young pioneer
had built a little cabin on a rolling bench
in a low gap in the mountain. He had
cleared a field and was plowing it in the
spring with a homemade bull-tongue plow.

Mrs. Naylor was "feelin' poorly," so
the father, wishing to be helpful, took the
child along to the field. The day was
warm and sunny. The child was left in a
comfortable spot where the father could
see it as he passed by while at work.

All was peaceful until the horrified
father saw a large bear carrying the
screaming child into the forest.

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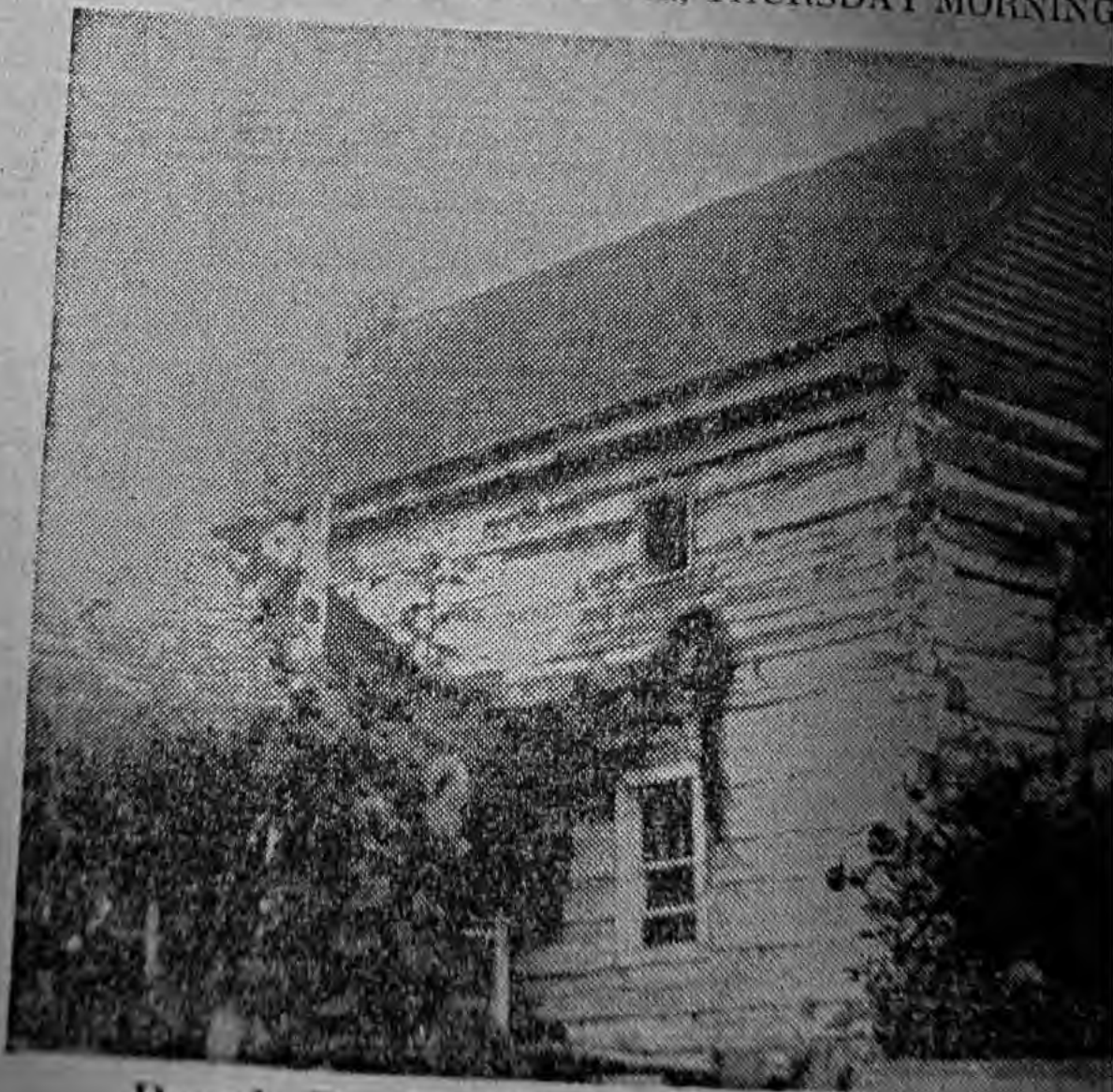
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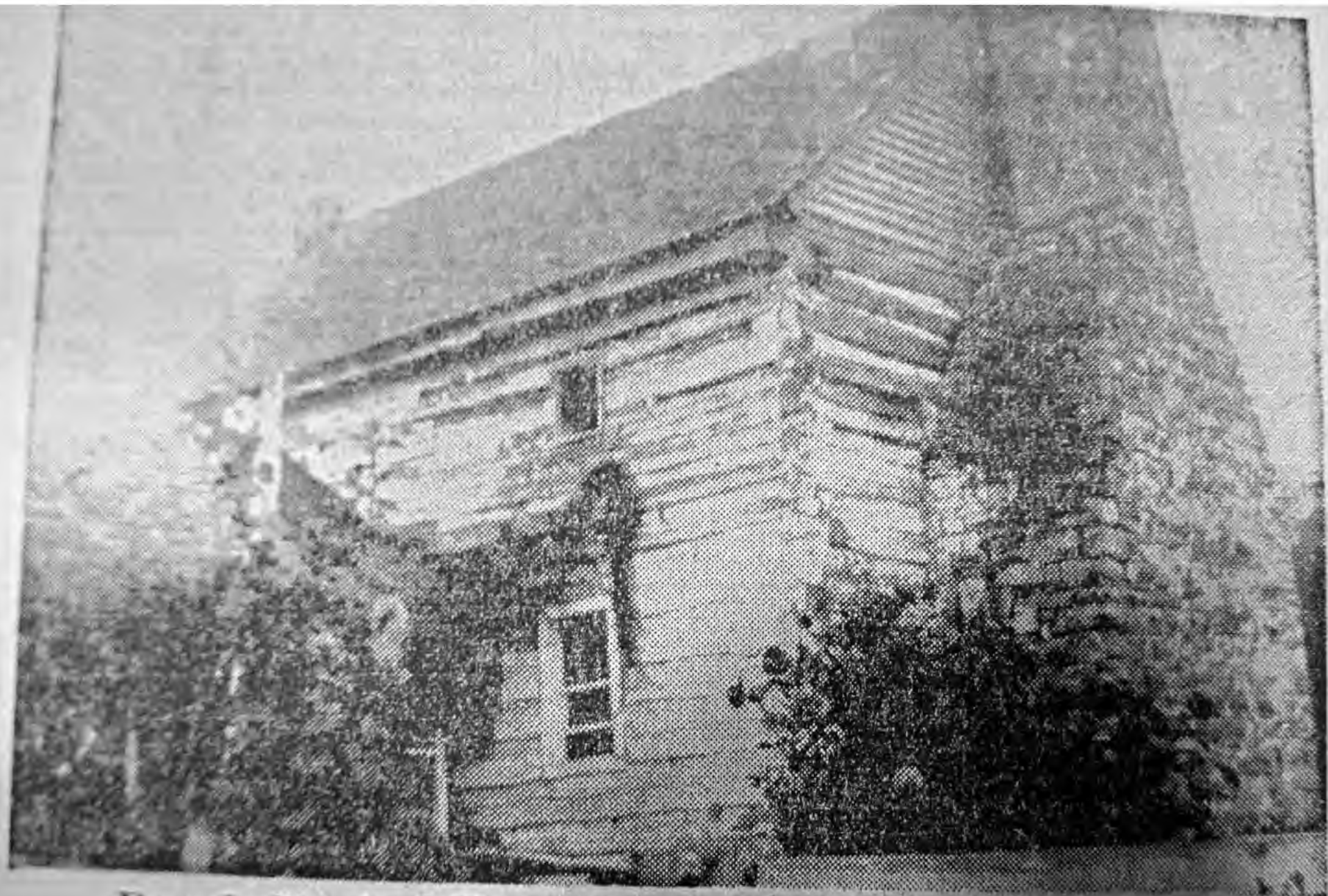
BUCKLEY, W. VA., THURSDAY MORNING



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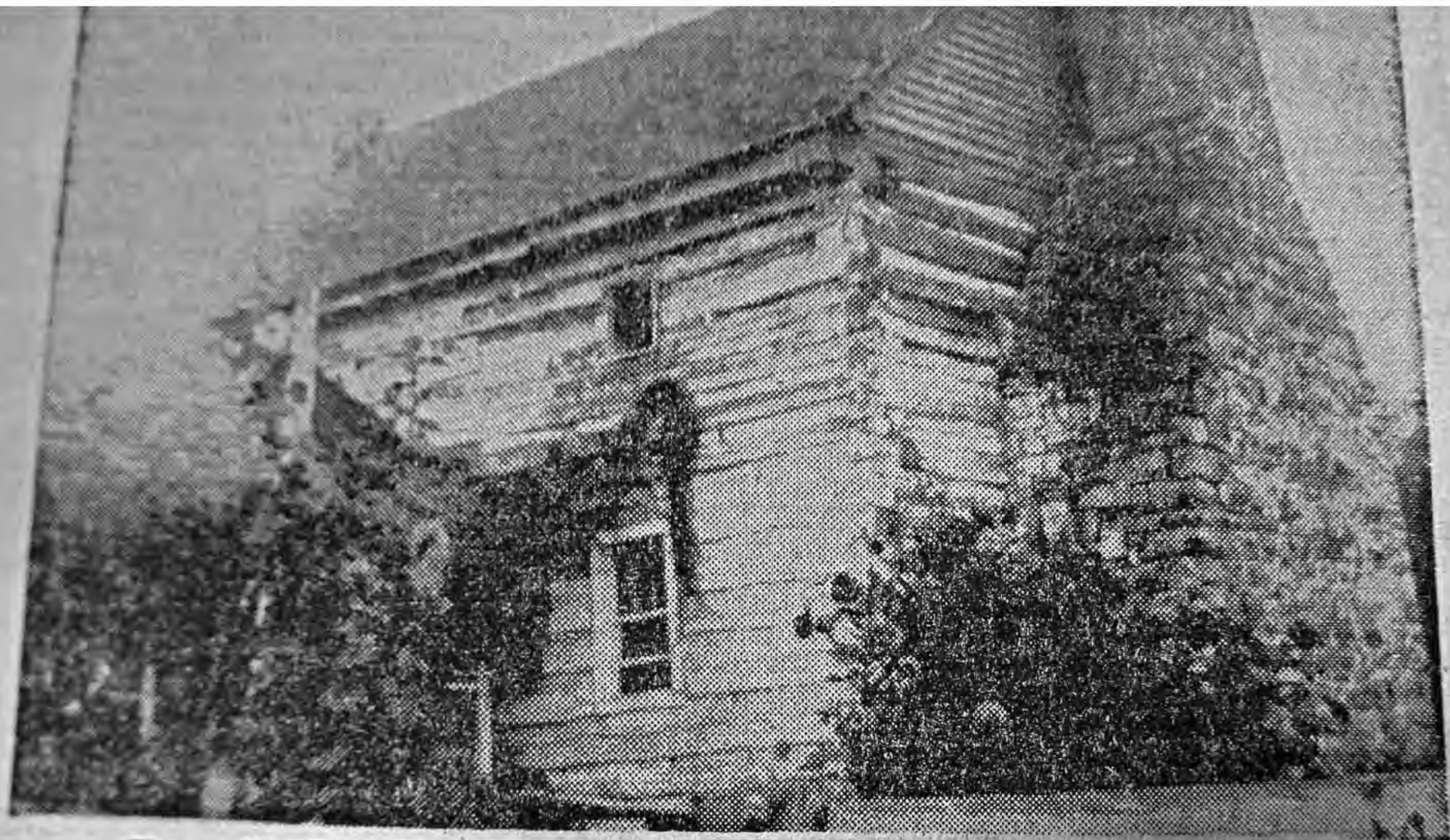


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house) should have been preserved as a monument to the pioneers, who with faith, powder, an axe, and intestinal fortitude, carved out of the wilderness fertile farms; built comfortable homes; left us a rich heritage which we should nourish and perpetuate."



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